America's Clean Chit to Pak in Akshardham Temple Attack

†948. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that America has described the incident of Akshardham as heinous;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that America which is known for its quick shifts in stand, has given a clean chit to Pakistan and has refuted the charges of involvement of Pakistan in the terrorist attack on Akshardham Temple;

(c) whether it is due to the double policy of America; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) In official statements issued on 24th September 2002, the US State Department and the White House condemned the terrorist attack on Akshardham. The State Department spokesman said that the US was "shocked by this horrific attack", and the White House spokesman said it was "a particularly deadly attack and the President condemns it."

(b) No. U.S. government spokesmen have not commented on the identity of the attackers.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Richard Armitage's Statement Regarding Indo-Pak Tension

949. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, during his recent visit to India and Pakistan, observed that there was a decline in Indo-Pak tension, when at least 10 civilians were killed and over 19 children were injured in terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, the same day and terrorist killings had increased; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.